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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 7 November 2002, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:	Mr. Suazo	(Honduras)
later:	Mr. van der Pluijm (Vice-Chairman)	(Belgium)
later:	Mr. Suazo (Chairman)	(Honduras)

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(a) United Nations University

(b) United Nations Institute for Training and Research

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 94: Globalization and interdependence (*continued*) (A/C.2/57/L.29)

Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.29: Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence

1. **Mr. Vallenilla** (Venezuela), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text expressed the interest of the developing countries in establishing a frame of reference for globalization and ensuring that globalization promoted sustainable development and became a positive force for all. Over recent years, the international community had made significant commitments in that respect, which were embodied in the Monterrey Consensus and the Millennium Declaration.

2. The draft resolution reaffirmed the central role of the United Nations in addressing the challenges of promoting development, recognized the right of member countries to choose their own development paths and, in particular, called for the effective addressing of globalization through the integrated consideration of trade, finance, investment, technology transfer and developmental issues, and more participatory decision-making for international economic and financial policy.

Agenda item 95: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and of the twenty-fifth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/C.2/57/L.30)

Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.30: Twenty-fifth special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

3. **Mr. Vallenilla** (Venezuela), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the inhumane living conditions of many millions of persons worldwide were nowhere more evident than in the area of human settlements. As in previous years, the draft resolution stressed the actions that had been taken and sought to strengthen UN-Habitat. It therefore underlined the commitments made by Governments to implement the Millennium Declaration goals of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by the year 2020 and of halving the proportion of people who did not have safe drinking water and access to basic sanitation by the year 2015.

Agenda item 96: Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (*continued*) (A/C.2/57/L.31)

Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.31: Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

4. **Mr. Vallenilla** (Venezuela), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text called on the Secretary-General to establish a trust fund for the least developed countries and on Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector to contribute to such a fund.

5. *Mr. van der Pluijm (Belgium), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

Agenda item 90: Training and research

(a) United Nations University (A/57/31)

(b) United Nations Institute for Training and Research (A/57/14 and 479)

6. **Mr. van Ginkel** (Rector of the United Nations University), introducing the report of the Council of the United Nations University (UNU) for 2001 (A/57/31), said that the University had made good progress in the implementation of its strategic plan for 2000, which covered four years. New initiatives had been undertaken with several countries. For example, a new study on comparative regional integration had been launched in Belgium at the beginning of the year, since regional integration was a major topic on the agenda of many countries and multilateral organizations; with the German Government, the University was preparing an initiative on the effects of environmental degradation, including desertification and flooding, on human security, to start in January 2003; with the Brazilian Government, it was developing an initiative on the sound sustainable development of wetlands, focusing on the Pantanal; and with the support of the United Nations

Environment Programme and the Norwegian Government it was developing activities in the area of online learning, with particular emphasis on environmental issues.

7. As regards cooperation with the United Nations, the Vice-Rector of the University had served as senior adviser on reform and principal writer for the Secretary-General's report on the strengthening of the United Nations (A/57/387). He himself had represented the Secretary-General at the recent Global Mountain Summit in Kyrgyzstan.

8. As part of the UNU Virtual Learning Centre for Water, the International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) was creating a training programme on integrated water resource management. In mid-November 2002, the University, together with the United Nations Office in Geneva would be organizing the third Geneva Research and Policy Dialogue, following the Secretary-General's call for UNU to play a more coordinating role in the research community within the United Nations system.

9. There was also extensive cooperation with United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Environmental Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

10. Progress had been made in furthering the role of UNU as a think tank for the United Nations system and a bridge between the international academic community and the United Nations family. For example, under its Peace and Governance programme, UNU was collaborating in a research project on ethnic conflict in Africa, focused on how to conduct research in societies ravaged by ethnic conflict and violence. The aim was to generate findings that could be encapsulated in training materials for experts who were working on such issues or who might wish to work for aid agencies conducting relief work. Also, in May 2002, the University had organized a conference to take stock of the effect of events in South Asia on international peace and security.

11. During 2002, the University's World Institute for Development Economics Research had been studying the feasibility of a coordinated approach to reducing the impact of the steep decline in capital flows to the developing world; research results would outline specific measures to encourage higher and more sustained capital flows to give greater impetus to developing country economies. An international conference on poverty, international migration and asylum in September 2002 had focused on the economic consequences of immigration and asylum migration.

12. The University's Environmental and Sustainable Development programme was seeking to help research centres in East Asia understand the extent of pollution to coastal areas from land-based sources, and was working closely on preparations for the third World Water Forum in 2003.

13. The Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) had started an initiative on biosecurity, addressing issues of biosafety, access and benefit-sharing and also traditional knowledge in the area of genetic resources. An initial set of capacity-development activities in the area of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing had been launched in Central Asia with a workshop in mid-2002.

14. The International Institute for Software Technology (UNU-IIST) was working to assist developing countries in such areas as e-business, chip design and component-based programming and the Institute for New Technologies (UNU-INTECH) continued to investigate the constraints to the use of the Internet in Africa.

15. The University's Capacity Development programme had continued to organize training programmes, which were delivered traditionally. However, in the light of the potential number of students worldwide, it was examining the possibility of offering courses online.

16. During preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the University had helped to forge new type 2 partnerships, for instance in the field of education for sustainable development. Bringing together organizations of educational professionals such as the International Council for Science and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations, it had attempted to mobilize teachers from a range of fields. It was currently involved in a major project in the Great Lakes region, with the cooperation of the World Bank and the Governments of Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, designed to bring about a significant improvement in the food situation in those countries.

17. **Mr. Boisard** (Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)) said that UNITAR organized about a dozen seminars, workshops or meetings each month over five continents, involving some 6,000 officials from Member States each year. It had implemented all the recent requests and recommendations of United Nations bodies, including the Second Committee. For the past 10 years, it had operated without any subsidy from the United Nations regular budget, a situation it would be unable to sustain for very much longer. To carry out action-oriented research activities, it had developed innovative methodologies, especially for evaluating training needs, identifying the impact of programmes, and gathering and disseminating information.

18. The activities of UNITAR were organized into two main clusters: on one hand, international affairs management and, on the other, economic and social development. The first cluster contained, inter alia, fellowship schemes relating to international law, preventive diplomacy and peace-building, as well as training programmes in multilateral diplomacy, open to all diplomats, regardless of origin or grade. Great efforts had been made to ensure a significant UNITAR presence in New York, where a number of highly appreciated training activities took place. Capacity-building programmes in the second cluster accounted for two thirds of UNITAR activities worldwide. Funded through special-purpose grants, such programmes took place exclusively at the national or regional levels in developing countries or countries with economies in transition, and focused on issues such as implementing international conventions and mastering information and communication technologies.

19. All programmes were conceived and implemented in close cooperation with other United Nations funds and programmes. Moreover, UNITAR worked together with specialized institutions outside the United Nations system, particularly with a view to disseminating information and building rosters of local experts. Considerable progress had been made in responding to recent calls by the General Assembly for UNITAR to develop a more systematic involvement in the work of the United Nations. For instance, it had taken a more active role in preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society, and developed a number of public-private partnership type 2 initiatives. Substantial e-learning programmes were to be undertaken shortly, including the increasing availability of courses on the Internet. For detailed statistics concerning the participation of each country in UNITAR programmes, he invited delegates to consult the UNITAR web site.

20. General Assembly resolutions over the previous decade had made repeated appeals to Governments, particularly those of developed countries, to provide UNITAR with the necessary financial support. All the relevant oversight bodies of the United Nations, including General Assembly Committees and the Office of Internal Oversight Services, had recognized the financial rigour and management competence with which UNITAR was run. Yet the renewed confidence had failed to translate into an increase in voluntary contributions. In its report on the biennium 2000-2001, the Board of Auditors had noted that only seven industrialized countries had contributed to the General Fund, which jeopardized the capacity of UNITAR to respond to the pressing needs of developing countries. Over the same period, the proportion of participants from developed nations in UNITAR programmes had more than doubled. In short, wealthy countries were taking advantage of free training through the self-financed Institute. Rather than prevent access to programmes for the citizens of States failing to make financial contributions to UNITAR, the Board of Trustees had decided to put faith in an enhanced awareness among Member States of the worth of UNITAR training, and a subsequent increase in voluntary contributions. In such a way, States could demonstrate their fresh confidence in UNITAR and reward its enhanced management and budgetary rigour.

21. The recommendation by an independent consultant appointed by the Secretary-General at the beginning of the 1990s to allocate US$ 2 million to UNITAR on an annual basis to cover fixed charges and programme costs had never been implemented. For many years, UNITAR had been requesting favourable rental rates and maintenance charges similar to those enjoyed by other organizations affiliated to the United Nations. The intergovernmental system as a whole, and the United Nations in particular, made considerable efficiency gains thanks to the UNITAR training programmes for diplomats in multilateral affairs, and it was therefore appropriate for the United Nations to make a contribution in kind. In fact, all other

intergovernmental organizations covered the operational expenses of training institutes established for the benefit of personnel of their Member States. The overall cost of such support to UNITAR would amount to US$ 150,000, which was only a tiny proportion of the United Nations regular budget.

22. **Ms. López Camacaro** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, commended the various teaching and research activities of UNU and stressed that human resources training was one of the most important factors in the sustainable development of developing countries. UNU had performed valuable research into peacemaking, conflict resolution, the environment and sustainable development, including special programmes on the dialogue of civilizations, water crises, and the establishment of training programmes and networks. However, if it was to fulfil its primary objective of "advancing knowledge for human security and development", funding would continue to be needed from various sources, including governments, foundations, NGOs and civil society, to help it continue its work of human resources capacity-building, particularly in the developing countries.

23. As for UNITAR, the Institute's training activities for diplomats covered not only the functioning of the United Nations system, but also topical matters of interest to the Organization and were of great value to developing countries, particularly in areas such as training in information and communications technology and training and capacity-building for economic and social development. However, the Institute's work was hampered by recurrent financial problems deriving from the fall in the developed countries' contributions and the high rental and maintenance costs it faced. In that connection, General Assembly resolution 56/208 had asked the Secretary-General to clarify why UNITAR did not benefit from rental rates and maintenance costs similar to those enjoyed by other organizations affiliated with the United Nations and to submit proposals to remedy that situation. Indeed, the sixteenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/57/7/Add.15) had pointed out that, although UNITAR had been able to meet its operating expenditure up to 30 September 2002, its debt for rental and maintenance costs alone amounted to $310,974.

24. The Group of 77 and China considered it important that UNITAR should continue to function effectively and therefore called on the General Assembly to provide it with the funding it needed to pursue its activities under the budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

25. **Mr. Mizukami** (Japan) reaffirmed his delegation's trust in the ability of the United Nations University to carry out the role which the international community had assigned to it in helping to address, in a holistic and multifaceted manner, the host of interrelated problems that had emerged in the world over the past quarter century.

26. His delegation highly appreciated the activities of UNU in a wide range of areas such as peace and governance, environment and sustainable development programmes and the development of human resources. Noting that dozens of multilateral environmental agreements had come into being since the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment and the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, he said that the international community should reflect upon how it should coordinate the activities undertaken under those agreements. In that respect, Japan welcomed the initiatives taken by the University to organize seminars involving eminent experts in international environmental law. Such initiatives served as necessary intellectual inputs to international norm-creating activities. His Government appreciated the University's recent role in expanding networking among academies and think tanks around the world and disseminating the results of its research. It was an opportune time to adopt a resolution on UNU in order to promote further its interaction with the United Nations system and to maintain the high visibility of its activities. In January 2001, the UNU building had been renamed "UN House" and several United Nations agencies in Japan had since moved their offices there and were expected to collaborate more closely with the University. Lastly, he called on more Member States to contribute financially to the work of the University.

27. **Mr. Avramenko** (Russian Federation) said that, although his delegation was satisfied with the contribution that UNITAR had made to enhancing the qualifications of staff and training and research work within the United Nations over the past 20 years, it was of the view that the Institute needed to further diversify and update its training programmes, methods and research studies to respond to growing and ever changing demands. For example, it could focus on areas such as the fight against terrorism and any forms

of extremism, issues pertaining to the new round of multilateral talks with the World Trade Organization and implementation of the decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the International Conference on Financing for Development, including providing matrix methodologies for relevant activities at the national and regional levels.

28. At the same time, the implementation of new thematic projects should not adversely affect the Institute's time-tested activities and achievements. The Russian Federation stood ready to help in every way possible to enhance the output of UNITAR in the interest of Member States.

29. Turning to UNU, he welcomed its focus on such global areas as security, human development, the environment, natural resources and information technology. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's policy of highlighting globalization as a key problem in the activities of the Organization in the social and economic spheres. In his delegation's view, the University must play an active role in that process, paying special attention to such problems as coordinating activities at the global level in the area of currency, finance and international trade policy, and providing assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to help them seize the opportunities created by globalization.

30. Noting that it was important for the University and UNITAR to cooperate with a great number of scientific and research institutes and centres throughout the world, he said that a training centre had been set up within the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to train staff for international activities. That was yet another promising area in which the United Nations and UNITAR could cooperate with national partners.

31. **Ms. Waldvogel** (Switzerland) said that one of the major advantages of UNITAR was its combination of knowledge and know-how acquired both in multilateral negotiations and in the field. Those twin assets enabled it to provide extremely effective assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition as well as industrialized countries in the various multilateral processes. It thus contributed actively to the implementation of Agenda 21 and of environmental conventions and provided assistance for the management of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.

32. In her delegation's view, UNITAR should be given strong political and financial support by Member States. It was regrettable that the Institute did not receive any direct financial contribution from the regular budget of the United Nations. While the financing of the programmes by the Special Purpose Grants Fund was relatively satisfactory, the resources available to the General Fund were not enough to enable the Institute to function properly. However, despite repeated appeals by the General Assembly for financial assistance, most of the major donors that had suspended their financial assistance during the Institute's crisis of the late 1980s, had yet to resume their financial contributions. In view of the Institute's dire financial situation, she called on Member States, particularly the industrialized countries and those that used the Institute's training programmes, to participate in the financing of the General Fund in order to ensure the viability and development of those programmes. Switzerland, for its part, would continue to support both the UNITAR General Fund and Special Purpose Grants Fund.

33. Referring to the Secretary-General's report prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/208 (A/57/479), she said that, since Switzerland provided UNITAR with free office space in the Environment Centre building, the information contained in paragraphs 3 and 14 was incorrect. As far as her delegation was aware, the costs paid by UNITAR at Geneva were solely maintenance costs, including running costs and contributions to a fund for repairs of the Environment Centre. Consequently, the Secretariat should provide more detailed information on the costs paid by UNITAR in Geneva and in New York with a view to a fruitful negotiation of the resolution to be adopted by the General Assembly at the current session.

34. **Mr. Al-Hadid** (Jordan) said that UNITAR should be strengthened and provided with sufficient resources in order to enable it to fulfil its mandate in the most effective manner. Moreover, it should be provided with office space by the United Nations on a rent-and maintenance-free basis, like other organizations affiliated with the United Nations. In that regard, he urged developed countries and civil society donors to support the General Fund and support and finance the activities of the United Nations University.

35. Reviewing the upcoming programmes and projects of the UNU Leadership Academy, he said that a major research project was measuring world public opinion on the challenges of global leadership in the twenty-first century. In another research project, the Academy was interviewing selected United Nations leaders to elicit their visions of and insights into the requirements of global leadership in future decades. Those forward-looking projects should help the international community's efforts to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to meet present and future leadership challenges.

36. The Academy was also considering developing training courses for mid-career government officials from member States of the Arab League. It planned to develop one-week courses that would draw on policy-oriented research undertaken by other units of the United Nations system, especially with regard to the linkages between trade and environment governance and conflict prevention.

37. **Mr. Leslie** (Belize), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that training and research were critical development tools in the CARICOM countries, especially in developing the necessary technical expertise in areas such as health, education and poverty eradication. E-commerce and mass communications were the norm in the technological age, but many developing countries lacked the resources that were crucial to their development process. In that regard, in order for the Caribbean nations to take full advantage of the e-learning programmes of UNITAR, they must be provided with the necessary technological skills and equipment. He welcomed the recognition by UNU in its report that mere fine tuning of the financial instruments in developing countries was not sufficient to meet their development objectives. Development also required investment in properly trained personnel to engage in research and development.

38. The collaborative efforts within the United Nations system through UNITAR and UNU to provide more effective training programmes for developing countries was one example of the effectiveness of partnerships. Efforts could be enhanced through national and regional partnerships with institutions of higher learning in the Caribbean countries and region. Such initiatives could serve to provide programmes that would be more relevant to the needs of CARICOM member States.

39. Access to safe drinking water and the issues related to climate change were extremely important to Caribbean States. In that regard, CARICOM applauded the University's $1.3 million project on water climate change in Central America, South-East Asia and West Africa. The initiative should include the Caribbean region, which could benefit from the exchange of information through best practices and lessons learned. Studies and initiatives on integrated management of the Caribbean Sea conducted through UNU partnership with CARICOM could be very beneficial and should be encouraged. Lastly, noting that UNITAR provided relevant training to CARICOM diplomats and delegates accredited to the United Nations, he expressed the hope that the necessary funding would continue to be provided through voluntary contributions for the Institute's continued sustainability.

40. **Mr. Nadai** (Israel) said that Israel supported the work of UNITAR, especially its emphasis on capacity-building, the development of human resources, the utilization of information and communication technologies and its reliance on the local authorities and communities for determining the steps necessary to address issues they were facing. Israel supported the focus on building human and institutional capacity, rather than simply providing aid and technical assistance. Such a focus was integral to the success of efforts to promote sustainable economic and social development.

41. Many of the themes in the Secretary-General's report on UNITAR had been central to his country's development over the past 50 years. Israel had recognized the importance of investing in education and various other fields, such as agriculture, science and technology and management. If developing countries were given the tools they needed to help themselves, even those that lacked natural resources were capable of developing vigorous modern economies.

42. Like UNITAR, Israel had focused its own training and assistance programmes on developing human potential, capacity-building and finding local solutions to local problems. Its Center for International Cooperation, MASHAV, had trained over 3,000 individuals in 2001 from over 100 different countries. Noting that the Center's programmes focused on areas in which Israel had particular expertise and sought to build human capacity in the developing world and

foster small-scale development projects, he said that education, training and capacity-building were central to successful sustainable development.

43. **Mr. Ingólffson** (Iceland) said that his Government had long-standing experience of cooperation with UNU. The Geothermal Training programme had been established in Iceland in 1978 and since that time leading professional scientists and engineers from the developing and transitional countries had followed the annual six-month programme. During the 24 years of operations, 279 scientists and engineers from 39 countries had completed the course, in many cases going on to become leading figures in the sector in their respective regions. The UNU Fisheries Training programme had been launched in 1998, with the aim of helping to build teams of experts in different areas of specialization. So far, 43 specialists from 15 countries had completed the six-month training course and sound cooperation had been established with countries such as Uganda, Mozambique, Gambia, Cape Verde, China, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam and Cuba.

44. The overriding theme of both programmes was sustainable use of natural resources and it was no coincidence that his Government was hosting them, since both sectors were of crucial importance to Iceland, with fisheries producing 60 per cent of its export revenue and geothermal sources accounting for 50 per cent of the country's total primary energy.

45. Technically advanced and sustainable use of fisheries and renewable energy resources had helped propel Iceland from the ranks of the developing countries in the 1960s to become one of the ten countries with the highest per capita GNP since the 1980s and it was keen to share the experience it had gained with developing and transitional countries through UNU programmes. It was therefore channelling a growing share of its multilateral development aid to those programmes and had received very favourable feedback from the recipient countries. His delegation welcomed the reappointment of Professor Hans van Ginkel as Rector of UNU and looked forward to continued cooperation with the University.

46. *Mr. Suazo (Honduras) resumed the Chair.*

47. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan) said that his delegation welcomed the statement by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and attached great importance to the promotion of training and research at all levels in the United Nations. He commended the work of the United Nations Staff College, UNU and UNITAR, which was an increasingly useful tool in enhancing the capacity of Member States to participate effectively in intergovernmental negotiations. He commended the many training activities conducted by UNITAR over the previous two years, which had been attended by some 12,000 participants, and welcomed the fact that it had strengthened its network of partnerships in compliance with General Assembly resolution 56/208 and was also playing a part in promoting the goals of the Millennium Declaration.

48. Despite the Institute's impressive track record, however, it was disturbing that nothing had been done to strengthen its financial situation, particularly as regards the provision of a rent-free space. In its resolution 56/208, the General Assembly had asked the Secretary-General to clarify why UNITAR did not benefit from rental rates and maintenance costs similar to those enjoyed by other organizations affiliated with the United Nations. Although the Secretary-General's report (A/57/479) had spelled out the financial implications of doing so, it had failed to address the principal question of why UNITAR was subject to such discrimination. He hoped that the General Assembly would now send a clear signal that the Institute should be provided with office space on a rent-and maintenance-free basis. Lastly, given the important role they played, all United Nations training institutions, particularly UNITAR, should be given the resources needed to enable them to fulfil their tasks effectively.

49. **Mr. Lolo** (Nigeria) said that, although it was clear from the popularity of its activities and the diversity of the participants that UNITAR was providing a valuable service, the Institute was severely hampered by the poor state of its finances and more funding from diverse sources was needed if it was to fulfil its tasks effectively.

50. In its resolution 56/208, the General Assembly had asked the Secretary-General to clarify why UNITAR did not benefit from rental rates and maintenance costs similar to those enjoyed by other organizations affiliated with the United Nations and to submit proposals on how to cut those costs in order to alleviate the Institute's current financial difficulties. While his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendation that the United Nations should assume the rental and maintenance costs, it called on

the Secretary-General to consider waiving the $300,000 still owed by the Institute for such costs. That would place it on the same footing as other similar organizations and would enhance its ability to pursue its courses, programmes and activities effectively.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.